Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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Consideration of submissions of States Parties as provided for in Article 5

Analysis of the request submitted by Eritrea for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

Submitted by the President of the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions

1. Eritrea ratified the Convention on 27 August 2001. The Convention entered into force for Eritrea on 1 February 2002. In its initial transparency report submitted on 3 September 2003, Eritrea reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Eritrea was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 February 2012. Eritrea, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 31 March 2011 to the President of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP), a request for an extension of its deadline. On 11 May 2011, the 10MSP President wrote to Eritrea to request additional information. Eritrea provided a response on 7 June 2011 and subsequently, on 11 August, Eritrea submitted to the President of the 10MSP a revised request for an extension of its deadline until 1 February 2015. The Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) agreed unanimously to grant the request.

2. In granting Eritrea's request in 2011, the 11MSP, while noting that it may have been unfortunate that after almost ten years since entry into force a State Party was unable to account for what remains to be done, it is positive that Eritrea intended to take steps to garner an understanding of the true remaining extent of the challenge and to develop plans accordingly that precisely project the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. In this context, the 11MSP noted the importance of Eritrea requesting only the period of time necessary to assess relevant facts and develop a meaningful forward looking plan based on these facts. The 11MSP further noted that, by requesting a 3 year extension, Eritrea was projecting that it would need approximately three years from the date of submission of its request to obtain clarity regarding the remaining challenge, produce a detailed plan and submit a second extension request.

3. On 23 January 2014 Eritrea submitted to the President of the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties (13MSP) a request for an extension of its 1 February 2015 deadline. On

19 March 2014, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies wrote to Eritrea to request additional information. Eritrea provided a response to the Co-Chairs questions on 1 April 2014 and subsequently, on 9 May 2014, Eritrea submitted a revised request. Eritrea's request is for five years, until 1 February 2020.

4. The request indicates that during the initial extension period non-technical survey teams were deployed to the regions of Anseba (Hagaz, Keren, Halhal, Geleb, Elaberid, Hamelmalo, Asmat and Aditekelezan), Northern Red Sea (Karora, Afabet, Shieb, Foro and Massawa), Southern Red Sea (Central Denkalia, Southern Dankalia, Assab, and Araata) and Central (Serejeka, Gala Nefhi and Berik) to gather information on the mined areas recorded by the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS). The request indicates that of the 672 areas totalling approximately 90 million square meters, which were identified as remaining in Eritrea's initial request, a total of 287 mined areas measuring 73,702,463 square meters were addressed through clearance and cancellation by non-technical survey. The request further indicates that out of these 287 mined areas, 157 mined areas measuring a total of 33.5 million square meters were addressed in 2013 almost entirely through the application of non-technical survey methodologies. The request further indicates that despite this progress, 49 previously unknown mined areas were discovered in the five regions of the country measuring approximately 9 million square meters.

5. The request indicates that total clearance during the extension period included 38 mined areas measuring 5,667,968 square meters with a total of 1,064 anti-personnel mines, 34 anti-tank mines and 2,218 other explosive remnant of war having been located and destroyed in the regions of Anseba (33 mined areas measuring 3,227,860 square meters), Gash Barka (two mined areas measuring 1,210,458 square meters), Southern (one mined areas measuring 231,432 square meters) and Northern Red Sea (2 mined areas measuring 998,218 square meters). The request also indicates that cancelation through non-technical survey amounted to 249 areas totalling 67,325,361 square meters in the regions of Southern (48 areas measuring 10,205,061 square meters), Southern Red Sea (four areas measuring 10,833,676 square meters), Northern Red Sea (69 areas measuring 16,015,195 square meters, Central (47 areas measuring 8,976,385 square meters), Gash Barka (50 areas measuring 12,546,260 square meters) and Anseba (31 areas measuring 8,748,784 square meters).

6. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as "the analysing group") noted with satisfaction that Eritrea is employing the full range of methods to permit the safe return of land to the population and encouraged Eritrea to continue seeking improved land release methods which could lead to Eritrea fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame. In this regard, the analysing group noted the importance of Eritrea continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with commitments the States Parties had made through the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan by providing information disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey.

7. The Co-Chairs, in noting that Eritrea's initial extension request was granted in order for Eritrea to conduct non-technical and technical survey to cancel or confirm mined areas in order to identify the exact remaining challenge, asked Eritrea to indicate the circumstances which have complicated Eritrea's efforts to meet this objective over the course of the first extension period. Eritrea responded by indicating that there are occasions apart from demining when teams participate in other crucial and outstanding government development programs in support of construction and agricultural projects, amongst others. Eritrea also indicated that despite all their efforts, they have also faced financial and material shortfalls impeding them from accomplishing their project objectives and that the experience of global mine action has proven that one poor nation's resources alone cannot

enable it to execute the project in contrast to countries obtaining tremendous external assistance.

8. The request indicates that the remaining challenge amounts to 434 mined areas totalling 33,432,818 square meters.

Table 1
Estimates of the size of remaining mined areas

Region	*Number of mined areas*	*Amount of area (square meters)*
Gash Barka	63	6,252,951
Anseba	144	10,230,940
Central	24	2,423,325
Southern	29	3,894,036
Northern Red Sea	166	9,462,537
Southern Red Sea	8	1,169,029
TOTAL		33,432,811

9. The Co-Chairs asked Eritrea to clarify which of the 434 areas and the total areas which are considered to be suspected hazardous areas (hence subject to further survey) and which are considered confirmed hazardous areas (hence subject to clearance activities). Eritrea responded by indicating that the remaining areas are considered suspected hazardous areas and will continue to be considered as such until additional surveys are carried out. The analysing group recalled that the United Nations' International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) state that evidence is required in order define areas as either "suspected hazardous area" or "confirmed hazardous area" and noted that adhering to IMAS guidance on this matter could provide greater clarity concerning the remaining challenge in Eritrea.1

10. The request indicates that anti-personnel mines have had a negative socio-economic impact on Eritrea by blocking access to pasture and agricultural land, impeding the development of infrastructure projects such as roads, schools and clinics as well as causing death and injury in affected communities. The request indicates that mine clearance activities have provided significant benefits and safety to the community and has supported national development plans. The request further indicates that, over the course of the initial extension period, a total of 52 people fell victim to mines in the regions of Central, Southern, Anseba, Northern Red Sea and Gash Barka, with 9 having been killed and 43 injured. The request further indicates that the victims included 26 males under 18 injured and six killed, six males over 18 injured and two killed, ten females under 18 injured and one killed and one female over 18 injured, with most of them injured or killed when herding or walking for their daily activities. The analysing group noted that Eritrea has collected and provided data on victims "disaggregated by sex and age" in keeping with commitments made in the Cartagena Action Plan. The analysing group further noted that

[1] The United Nations' International Mine Action Standards define "Suspected Hazardous Area" as "an area where there is reasonable suspicion of mine/explosive remnants of war contamination on the basis of indirect evidence of the presence of mines/explosive remnants of war," and "Confirmed Hazardous Area" as "an area where the presence of mine/ explosive remnants of war contamination has been confirmed on the basis of direct evidence of the presence of mines/explosive remnants of war."

progress in the implementation of Article 5 during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socioeconomic conditions in Eritrea.

11. As noted, Eritrea's request is for five years (until 1 February 2020) in order to accomplish the task of resurvey to identify the actual mined areas needing to be subjected to demining operations. The request indicates that, over the course of five years, the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) will continue survey and mine clearance operations. The request indicates that, due to multifaceted challenges and the unfortunate discovery of new contaminated areas, Eritrea is requesting until 1 February 2020 to accomplish resurvey tasks parallel to demining operations in order to confirm the areas requiring clearance. The request further indicates that, with a substantial transitional period, Eritrea will be able to gain the clarity required to report on the remaining areas known to contain mines by the end of this extension period. The analysing group noted that, while it is important that Eritrea request only the period of time necessary to assess relevant facts and develop a meaningful forward looking plan based on these facts, five additional years beyond its 1 February 2015 deadline appeared like a long period of time to meet this objective.

12. The request indicates that Eritrea plans to deploy at least five demining teams, which could be increased if adequate financial and logistical support is found. The request indicates that currently capacity includes: five demining teams with each demining team having 64 people for a total of 320 deminers; three explosive ordnance disposal teams with each team having five people; two survey teams with each team having five people; two quality assurance teams with each team having five people; ten MRE teams with each team having four people and; 150 community volunteers who support MRE teams in carrying out mine risk education activities. The request further indicates that, following updated training, the demining teams are expected to be deployed and conduct technical survey in the priority regions of Anseba (Hagaz, Keren, Halhal, Geleb, Elaberid, Hamelmalo, Asmat, Kerkebet, Habero and Aditekelezan), Northern Red Sea (Karora, Mahmimet, Afabet, Shieb, Foro and Massawa), Gash Barka (Haikota, Tseney, Gogne, Agordat, Shambuko) and Central (Serejeka, Gala Nefhi and Berik). The request also indicates that, while surveys will be conducted in relevant locations all over the country, as per existing national priorities, survey teams will be deployed primarily in the regions of Northern Red Sea (Karora) and Southern Red Sea (Areata, Assab, Central Denkali and Southern Denkalia).

13. The request indicates that to, achieve better results, the EDA is restructuring at all levels. The Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance asked Eritrea if, given that mixed teams containing female and male personnel have been proven to collect more detailed information on contamination, non-technical survey teams will include female and male personnel. Eritrea responded by indicating that women have been participating from the very beginning of the project with equal opportunities and are further encouraged to continue to do so. Eritrea further added that women have made a remarkable contribution to the information collected by community volunteers in the sphere of mine risk education

14. The request indicates that, based on experience, demining teams have an assumed clearance rate of 384,000 square meters per team per year and that, therefore, the five demining teams will have a capacity of 1,920,000 square meters per year with a total clearance progress in the five year period calculated to be 15,360,000 square meters. The request also indicates that this may be ambitious taking into account the support required from demining teams to support re-survey teams in carrying out area reduction activities as well as the requirements of demining teams to also support government development priorities.

15. The Co-Chairs asked Eritrea if, based on Eritrea's experience in carrying out non-technical survey and taking into account national priorities, it could provide milestones for progress in its survey operations, indicating when and where survey activities will take

place and what the expected results are. The Co-Chairs also asked for milestones for progress in clearance operations. Eritrea responded by indicating that it has included areas where resurvey and demining tasks are going to continue in the coming five years without adding detailed locations for each specific year given that, from its experience, operations were not smooth and regular in their progress and that it is assumed that field tasks may sometimes be slow and sometimes intense because of support to other development initiatives. Eritrea also indicated that, despite this, Eritrea will do its utmost to meet its objectives within the requested time frame and that demining is a top priority for Eritrea. The analysing group noted that Eritrea's response to the question posed by the Co-Chairs failed to provide a clear list of milestones (i.e. number of communities surveyed, number of mined areas and amount of mined area cleared) for each year of the extension period, thereby making it difficult for both Eritrea and all States Parties to assess progress in implementation during the extension period.

16. The request indicates that the overall total budget required for the five year extension is estimated to be US$ 7,166,800, which includes salaries for five demining teams (US$ 3,975,000), daily subsistence allowances for five demining teams (US$ 2,253,000), demining equipment (US$ 646,000), communications and camp equipment (US$ 62,000), personal, electrical and marking equipment (US$ 173,000), cooking tools and equipment (US$ 11,600) and explosive ordnance disposal and first aid equipment (US$ 46,200). The request further indicates that Eritrea, through the EDA, will continue its effort using existing human, material and financial resource to expedite the mine clearance programme and fulfil its obligations before the deadline proposed in this extension.

17. The Co-Chairs asked Eritrea if it could indicate how much of the funding will be covered by national sources and what it expects would need to be covered by funding external to the government of Eritrea, and if it could indicate how it intends to ensure that the necessary funds are acquired in a timely manner. Eritrea responded by indicating that it has estimated and indicated the breakdown of the financial support required to enable Eritrea to progress smoothly and expedite the demining program to achieve its objectives. Eritrea also indicated that if external funds are not acquired, field operations will continue using available national human and material resources as intended in the coming 5 years and that its main priority is to continue with the remaining resurvey.

18. The analysing group noted that, given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Eritrea could benefit from enhancing its resource mobilisation strategy and clarifying the costs that Eritrea's State budget would cover as part of the overall costs of implementation. The analysing group also noted that, given the importance of support from sources in addition to the State budget, Eritrea could benefit from providing more precise clarity regarding which areas of what size and at what locations remain to be addressed in each administrative area. The analysing group further noted that Eritrea could benefit from using such precision as a benchmark from which to measure and communicate progress. The analysing group noted that such an accounting of the remaining mined areas would both serve as a foundation for a resource mobilisation strategy and greatly assist both Eritrea and all States Parties in assessing progress in implementation during the extension period.

19. The Co-Chairs asked Eritrea if it has acted upon the 11MSP decision that "Eritrea may benefit from outreach to international mine action operators or advisors in order to take advantage of the latest survey methods, equipment and lessons learned on land release as well as to access additional sources of international funding", or if it intended to do so. Eritrea responded by reiterating that the policy of Eritrea regarding external support is that Eritrea welcomes support based on equal partnership which is in compliance with the general development plans of the nation under the approval of the Ministry of National Development.

20. The analysing group noted that Eritrea had largely sought to comply with the commitment it had made, as recorded by the decisions of the 11MSP, to garner an understanding of the true remaining extent of the challenge and develop a plan accordingly. However the analysing group noted that while steps have been taken to clarify the remaining challenge, a detailed annual work plan for survey and clearance leading to completion and based on accurate and coherent data is still missing.

21. The analysing group noted that, while it would appear that Eritrea possesses more knowledge than it did in 2010 about the remaining extent of the challenge, the information provided could be communicated with greater clarity and in an unequivocal manner. The analysing group further noted that Eritrea's efforts to carry out resurvey and identify the actual mined areas needing to be subjected to demining operations could be accomplished in less than the 5 years being requested by Eritrea. In this regard, the analysing group noted that the Convention would benefit from Eritrea submitting to the States Parties, through the Convention's President, by 1 March 2015, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The analysing group noted that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to containing anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and area that would be dealt with each year during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, and a detailed budget.

22. The analysing group noted that it would be beneficial if Eritrea provided updates relative to commitments noted in paragraph 12 of this analysis and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings and at Meetings of the States Parties. In addition, the analysing group noted that the Convention would benefit from Eritrea informing the States Parties on an annual basis, as relevant, on the following:

(a) The number, location and size of remaining mined areas, plans to clear or otherwise release these areas and information on areas already released, disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and nontechnical survey in accordance with Action #17 of the Cartagena Action Plan.

(b) Efforts to diversify funding sources and to reach out to other relevant parts of the government to contribute to covering the costs of implementing Eritrea's national plans for survey and mine clearance,

(c) Resources obtained relative to needs expressed in the request, including resources provided by the Government of Eritrea itself.